

Media Release

LUCERNE FESTIVAL FORWARD 2025

The fifth edition of the contemporary music festival, which takes place on 21–23 November, will present Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Anastasia Kobekina, Charlotte Hug, and Tapiwa Svosve in performance alongside musicians from the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO).

A large-scale sonic parcours, titled “Outside Inside”, will be held in and around the KKL Lucerne and will feature some 300 participants from the Lucerne region.

Also on the program is Carola Bauckholt’s “Hirn & Ei”, a piece composed for four Gore-Tex rain jackets.

Lucerne, 24 June 2025. For the fifth edition of the Forward Festival for Contemporary Music, which takes place on 21–23 November 2025, a 12-member curatorial team – comprising alumni of the Lucerne Festival Academy – has invited prominent artists including Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Anastasia Kobekina, Charlotte Hug, and Tapiwa Svosve to join them in crafting an experimental and multi-faceted program.

Over the course of three days, the festival will present three concerts featuring musicians from the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra (LFCO): an opening event in the Luzerner Theater Box and two performances in the KKL Concert Hall. The program also includes a family concert, a large-scale participatory sonic happening in the KKL Lucerne, and a panel discussion on the future of contemporary music, as well as an exhibition and book launch marking the 125th anniversary of the Swiss Musicians’ Association.

The festival will open Friday evening in the Luzerner Theater Box with the world premiere of a commission by Neo Huelcker titled *other spaces*, alongside *Hirn & Ei* by Carola Bauckholt, which calls for four percussionists to conjure an array of rhythms and textures by brushing and rubbing their Gore-Tex rain jackets.

On Saturday evening, the violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja will join the Contemporary Leaders curatorial team for the third time in a row – this time additionally playing the role of composer. Together with rising cello star Anastasia Kobekina, “PatKop” will introduce her new concerto *Five Dreams* for violin, cello, and chamber orchestra.

In a Late Night event on Saturday, the performer-composer Charlotte Hug – winner of the 2025 Swiss Music Prize – will present *Multiple Encounters in Constant Change*, a multidisciplinary performance that navigates the intersections of body, sound, and visual art. Working with large panels of fabric, she creates fleeting “Son-Icons” using brush and water. Meanwhile, the Zurich-based jazz saxophonist Tapiwa Svosve blurs boundaries of genre through improvisation in *Woodworks Vol. 5*.

The festival concludes on Sunday with *Draussen Drinnen*, an expansive sonic happening by Daniel Ott and Enrico Stolzenburg involving some 300 participants. Alongside LFCO professionals, the performers will include students from the Hochschule Luzern – Musik, local music school pupils, carnival groups, traditional whip crackers (“Geisslechlöpfer*innen”), and amateur athletes from the Lucerne region.

The Family Concert *Wassermusik* (“Water Music”) offers a musical journey designed for three school classes and three string trios. To celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Swiss Musicians’ Association, Thomas Gartmann and Doris Lanz will introduce their new books, followed by a roundtable discussion

featuring Charlotte Hug, Daniel Ott, Tapiwa Svosve, and Mark Sattler exploring the provocative theme: “Where is contemporary music heading – or has it reached the end?”

The 2025 edition of the Forward Festival will be the final festival under the leadership of Executive and Artistic Director Michael Haefliger. His successor, Sebastian Nordmann, will announce plans for 2026 at the end of January 2026.

For details on the complete concert schedule and additional information, please visit lucernefestival.ch. Tickets go on sale starting 5 August 2025, at 10:00 a.m. (CET).

Contemporary Leaders: Curators of Lucerne Festival Forward 2025

Jack Adler-McKean tuba (United Kingdom)

Ettore Biagi clarinet (Italy)

Claire Chenette oboe (USA)

Estelle Costanzo harp (Switzerland/France)

Deepa Goonetilleke horn (Sri Lanka/Australia)

Markus Hohti cello (Finland)

Winnie Huang violin and viola; performance artist (China/Australia)

Helga Karen piano (Finland)

Edward Kass double bass (USA)

Marina Kifferstein violin, composer (USA)

Stephen Upshaw viola (USA)

Raimonda Žiūkaitė composer, performer (Lithuania)

Photos may be downloaded at lucernefestival.ch/en/press/photos.

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